

Grantee News

Policy Victories:

- Due to advocacy by the Housing and Community Development Network of NJ, Isles, Inc., NJ Citizen Action Education Fund, Anti-Poverty Network of NJ, and partners, significant action has occurred to prevent the lead poisoning of children in NJ:
 - Governor Christie made \$10 million available for lead abatement efforts in FY 2016 through the Department of Community Affairs. This action comes after years of Lead Hazard Control Act fund raids by the Christie Administration; however, it will be funded by money taken from the state's affordable housing trust fund. Read more [here](#) and [here](#).
 - Governor Christie ordered the NJ Department of Health to align NJ's definitions of lead poisoning with stricter national standards from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Previously, NJ defined lead poisoning as blood lead levels ≥ 10 $\mu\text{g}/\text{dL}$ of lead, while the CDC level is 5 $\mu\text{g}/\text{dL}$. Read more [here](#).
 - Governor Christie also committed the State to testing water in all NJ public schools for elevated levels of lead and urged the Legislature to include \$10 million in the State's FY 2017 budget to pay for the water testing. Read more [here](#) and [here](#).
- The U.S. Department of Justice Civil Rights Division (DOJ) released its consent decree with the City of Newark, laying out a court-enforced agreement to reform the Newark Police Department. Former NJ Attorney General Peter Harvey will be the independent monitor (with a 5-year appointment) and has a budget of up to \$7.4 million (to be paid for by the City of Newark). This consent decree came after a DOJ investigation revealed that the Newark Police Department had engaged in unconstitutional practices. The ACLU-NJ's 2010 petition spurred DOJ's investigation, and ACLU-NJ has advocated for increased transparency and police accountability throughout the process and presented recommendations to the City of Newark and the DOJ for consideration. Read here for the [DOJ press release](#) and [ACLU-NJ press release](#).
- The Newark City Council unanimously approved a law to permanently codify the Civilian Complaint Review Board (CCRB) that was established by Mayor Baraka's 2015 Executive Order. The CCRB establishes public oversight of the police department in order to increase transparency and accountability and build community/police trust. The Newark CCRB is among the strongest in the nation, and community partners (including ACLU-NJ and Ironbound Community Corporation) will participate on the CCRB. Read more [here](#).
- The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) has delayed a decision on authorization of the proposed PennEast pipeline until March 16, 2017. This is a victory for opponents of the PennEast pipeline and advocates for clean energy (Rethink Energy Coalition, Environment NJ, Eastern Environmental Law Center, and partners), as PennEast had requested that a decision be issued by August 2016. Read more [here](#).
- Due to advocacy by the Delaware Riverkeeper Network and partners, the Delaware River Basin Commission agreed to conduct an independent review of the PennEast pipeline and will hold multiple public hearings in NJ and PA over the next year. This diverges from its earlier decision to request a joint hearing of the pipeline with the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission. Read more [here](#).
- Due to advocacy by the Supportive Housing Association of NJ and partners, the Department of

Community Affairs will expand the State Rental Assistance Program by 500 vouchers. 400 vouchers will be allocated to chronically homeless households and 100 vouchers will be allocated to disabled veterans. Governor Christie also proposed 500 new vouchers for intellectually and developmentally disabled people in his FY 2017 budget. Read more [here](#).

Policy Setbacks:

- The Board of Public Utilities approved the New Jersey Natural Gas (“Southern Reliability”) pipeline through the Pinelands despite advocacy by the Pinelands Preservation Alliance, partners, and local residents to protect conserved areas. The new 30-mile pipeline is the second pipeline through the Pinelands to be approved by the Board of Public Utilities this year. As in the case of the last pipeline, the NJ Natural Gas pipeline was never brought to a vote before the Pinelands Commission. The Pinelands Preservation Alliance and NJ Sierra Club are challenging the pipeline’s approval. Read more [here](#), [here](#), and [here](#)
- Governor Christie conditionally vetoed a bill that would have made permanent a temporary emergency assistance program for chronically ill and disabled people who lost their housing assistance last year. Last year, the NJ Department of Human Services announced that it would not renew housing hardship programs that allowed for chronically ill and disabled people to receive rental assistance payments beyond the 24-month cap of the state’s emergency assistance program, causing more than 3,000 people to lose their housing. Efforts by the Anti-Poverty Network of NJ, Legal Services of NJ, Housing and Community Development Network of NJ, Supportive Housing Association of NJ, and partners led to the establishment of an interim program that provided four additional months of rental assistance and helped with identifying permanent affordable housing. This legislation was meant to provide a permanent solution to prevent homelessness. Instead, Governor Christie’s conditional veto only allows for two 6-month renewals if proof of hardship is provided. Read more [here](#).
- Governor Christie vetoed legislation that would have allowed the Board of Public Utilities (BPU) to advance off-shore wind projects and would have required the BPU to provide application periods for wind energy projects. Advocates, including Environment NJ, had hoped that this legislation would allow the Fisherman’s Energy off-shore wind pilot to move forward. Read more [here](#).
- The NJ Department of Environmental Protection released a new proposal that would increase the number of septic systems (by up to 1,100) in the Highlands region’s forested area (the most protected area of the Highlands), thus increasing permitted development. The new rules would allow for one septic tank per 23 acres of forested area, a significant increase from the current rule that allows for one septic tank per 88 acres. NJ Highlands Coalition and partners will advocate against the proposed rule on the basis that it will degrade water quality in the Highlands. Water sources within the Highlands provide water to 6.2 million people across the state. Read more [here](#).
- Assemblymen McKeon and Burzichelli and Senator Scutari introduced bills to overturn the comprehensive bail reform law that was enacted after a 2014 ballot question was passed with overwhelming support from NJ voters (62%-38%). Drug Policy Alliance, a key player in the 2014 effort to pass bail reform, is advocating against the bills. Bail reform has been rolled out in three pilot vicinages this year, and will be implemented statewide starting January 2017.
- Governor Christie conditionally vetoed a bill to strengthen pay equity protections in NJ, criticizing the bill for calling for provisions stronger than the federal Lily Ledbetter Act. The bill was intended to protect against wage discrimination and promote equal pay for women. According to the

National Women's Law Center, women in NJ make \$0.80 for every dollar paid to men. Read more [here](#).

Policy Updates:

- Education Law Center wrote a letter to Commission Hesper (NJ Department of Education) and Charles McKenna (School Development Authority) highlighting the State's obligation to identify and remediate the elevated levels of lead found in the water supply in many of Newark Public Schools facilities. The State is "required to fully fund, undertake, and complete all school facilities improvements in districts classified 'SDA districts'...to ensure those students a constitutional 'thorough and efficient' education." Read the full letter [here](#).
- Governor Christie conditionally vetoed a bill that would have required the Commissioner of Human Services to apply for federal waivers from Supplementary Nutritional Assistance Program (SNAP) limits that affect able-bodied adults without dependents (ABAWDs). Federal regulations require that ABAWDs work at least 20 hours per week in order to receive SNAP, though there was a nationwide waiver for this requirement through December 2015 due to the high unemployment rate. Without a nationwide waiver, 11,000 NJ households are poised to lose necessary food assistance. The bill passed by the Legislature would have required the Commissioner to apply for waivers for cities where unemployment exceeds 7.6%. Governor Christie's conditional veto calls upon the Commissioner to examine city and county joblessness data and take actions to apply for waivers when the rates are determined to be too high, a step in the right direction as he had previously said that the NJ Department of Human Services would not apply for federal waivers. However, as Raymond Castro (NJ Policy Perspective) has noted, "the conditional veto appears to only give the Commissioner more discretion to apply for waivers but does not require her to do so even when the data show that there are no jobs or training available." Read more [here](#).

Policy Reports:

- NJ Policy Perspective released *Raising New Jersey's Minimum Wage to \$15 an Hour Would Boost a Large and Diverse Group of Working Men and Women*, which details the benefits of a \$15 minimum wage on 1 in 4 NJ residents (approximately 975,000 people). 91% of workers affected by this change are aged 20 and older and 61% are full-time workers. Read the full report [here](#).
- NJ Policy Perspective also released *Earned Sick Leave for All Would Help New Jersey's Workers & Boost its Economy*, highlighting the positive economic (due to reduced turnover and greater productivity) and public health benefits of ensuring that all workers have access to earned sick leave. Thus far, 12 NJ municipalities have adopted earned sick day policies. Read more [here](#).
- Education Law Center (ELC) released *Is School Funding Fair? A National Report Card* (5th edition) which finds that public school funding in most states remains unfair and inequitable. ELC also released a companion report, *Is School Funding Fair? America's Most Fiscally Disadvantaged School Districts*, highlighting districts with higher than average student need and lower than average school funding when compared to other districts in their regional labor market. Read the reports [here](#) and [here](#).
- The Center for Non-Profits released *New Jersey Non-Profits 2016: Trends and Outlook Survey Results*, detailing non-profit funding and expenses, outlook for the coming year, and actions taken by non-profits to address 2016 trends. Read the full report [here](#).

Events

- May 7th—[The Citizens Campaign Civic Summit](#)
- May 17th—[Policy Briefing: Changing Land Use and Changing Energy \(PlanSmart NJ\)](#)
- May 18th—[National Convening on Economic Mobility, Jobs, and Workforce Development \(NJ Institute for Social Justice\)](#)
- May 19th—[Anti-Poverty Network of NJ Cost of Poverty Report Release](#)
- May 24th—[Council of NJ Grantmakers Spring Colloquium: A Conversation on the Social Sector](#)
- May 25th—[Anti-Poverty Network of NJ General Meeting](#)
- June 2nd—[NJ Foundation for Aging 18th Annual Conference](#)
- June 7th—[NJ Environmental Justice Alliance Meeting: Infrastructure & Resiliency in Environmental Justice](#)
- June 15th—[Bringing Students Together: The Obstacles and Opportunities of School District Consolidation \(Education Law Center & Educational Testing Service\)](#)

Job Announcements

- ACLU-NJ—[Communications Director](#)
- Clean Water Fund—[Climate Organizer \(Newark\)](#)
- Faith in NJ—[Community Organizer](#)
- Hyacinth AIDS Foundation—[Health Educator](#)
- Hyacinth AIDS Foundation—[HIV Counselor](#)
- Hyacinth AIDS Foundation—[Client Service Manager](#)
- Hyacinth AIDS Foundation—[Project Recruitment Specialist](#)
- Isles, Inc.—[Case Manager](#)
- NJ Citizen Action—[Bilingual Loan Counselors](#)
- NJ Citizen Action—[Bilingual Tax Preparers](#)
- NJ Conservation Foundation--[Pine Barrens Regional Manager](#)
- NJ Institute for Social Justice—[Director for Finance and Operations](#)
- NJ Institute for Social Justice—[Director of Philanthropy](#)
- NJ Policy Perspective—[Operations Specialist](#)
- Princeton Area Community Foundation—[Accountant](#)
- Princeton Area Community Foundation—[Vice President of Grants and Programs](#)
- Princeton Area Community Foundation—[Vice President of Development Programs](#)
- Victoria Foundation—[Program Associate \(Two-Year Fellowship\)](#)

The Fund for New Jersey's news updates will be distributed monthly. Please send policy news and updates, job announcements, and staff updates to Ami Kachalia at akachalia@fundfornj.org.